

Message Text

SECRET

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15
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W
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P 210225Z MAR 75
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3926
INFO USDEL JEC PARIS PRIORITY
COMUSSAG NKP THAILAND PRIORITY
CINCPAC HONOLULU PRIORITY
COMIPAC HONOLULU PRIORITY

S E C R E T SAIGON 3235

EXDIS

MIL ADDRESSEES HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM FROM BIEN HOA 190 SENT ACTION AMEMBASSY SAIGON
MARCH 20 BEING REPEATED TO YOU, QUOTE:

S E C R E T BIEN HOA 190

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MOPS, VS
SUBJ: MILITARY SITUATION IN MR3

REF: BIEN HOA 187

1. THIS MESSAGE IS BASED ON SEPARATE CONVERSATIONS WITH MR3
COMMANDER LTG TOAN AND HIS CHIEF OF STAFF, COL MINH, AT 1600
HOURS MAR 20. THERE IS NO SIGNIFICANT CHANGE SINCE REFTEL IN
THE FIGHTING IN THE EASTERN PROVINCES. IN THE WESTERN AREAS,
THERE HAVE BEEN TWO NEW SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS. A LARGE GVN
CONVOY WAS AMBUSHED ON ROUTE 1 AT 1030 HOURS MAR 20 ABOUT 5
KMS NORTHWEST OF CU CHI WITH 16 TRUCKS LOST AT LATEST COUNT,
AND AN NVA ROADBLOCK STILL INTERDICTS ROUTE 1 AT THAT POINT AT
1600 HOURS. DUC HUE RANGER BASE IN WESTERN HAU NGHIA WAS EVACUATED

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UNDER HEAVY NVA PRESSURE AT 1100 HOURS MAR 20.

2. COL MINH SAID THAT THE CONVOY AMBUSHED NEAR CU CHI CONSISTED ALTOGETHER OF 55 TRUCKS BOUND FOR TAY NINH, MANY OF THEM EMPTY. AT LAST COUNT 8 TRUCKS IN THE LEAD PORTION OF THE CONVOY HAD PROCEEDED TO TRANG BANG, 16 LOADED WITH AMMUNITION OF VARIOUS KINDS WERE DESTROYED, ANOTHER 11 WERE ABANDONED BY DRIVERS BUT APPARENTLY INTACT AT THE AMBUSH POINT, AND 20 EMPTIES HAD WOTHDRAWN TO SAFE AREAS NEAR SAIGON. MINH THOUGHT THAT THE AMBUSH FORCE, WHICH STRUCK WITH BOTH AFB'S AND GROUND ASSAULT, WAS ABOUT BATTALION-SIZE AND HE PRESUMED IT WAS FROM SOME ELEMENT OF THE 9TH NVA DIV. THE NVA FORCE STILL HAD THE ROAD INTERDICTED AT 1600 HOURS BUT TRAFFIC WAS ALREADY BEING DIVERTED AND FLOWING TO TAY NINH ON A BYPASS TO THE SOUTH FROM CU CHI TO DUC HUE DISTRICT TOWN IN HAU NGHIA THENCE TO TRANG BANG ON ROUTE 1.

3. THE 83RD RANGER BN WITHDREW FROM DUC HUE RANGER BASE IN THE WESTERN EXTREMITY OF HAU NGHIA PROVINCE GIVING IT UP TO THE NVA AFTER TAKING INTENSE ABF'S AND GROUND ASSAULT THROUGH THE MORNING OF MAR 20, CAUSING AMONG OTHER THINGS LOSS OF THE BASE AMMUNITION DUMP. THE 83RD IS PULLING BACK TO DUC HUE DISTRICT TOWN ON THE EASTERN BANK OF THE VAM CO DONG RIVER.

4. AN AIR AMERICA CHOPPER FLYING ON THE DECK OVER ROUTE 1 TOWARD TAY NINH AT MIDDAY CAME INTO THE CROSSFIRE AT THE AMBUSH POINT ESCAPED WITHOUT HITS. AFTER SETTING DOWN TO CHECK FOR HITS, AND AFTER PICKING UP A CHASE SHIP, THE HELO PROCEEDED TO TAY NINH AND RETURNED SAFELY WITH ITS CONGEN PASSENGERS TO BIEN HOA.
PETERS UNQUOTE
LEHMANN

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